



*Ascension*  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ELCA  
May 2015

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# THE *Ascension* NEWSLETTER



*Ascension*  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ELCA



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1415 Dopp Street  
Waukesha, WI 53188



**MONDAY - THURSDAY**

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**FRIDAY**

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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## GOD IS NEAR

As Mother's Day approaches, I am reminded of a challenging experience. I needed to take our son Konami to the dentist. A trip to the dentist is rarely a welcomed event for most children, but since our son is experiencing autism, it was especially difficult. Because of his limited speech, it is hard for him to articulate his needs. During this time, we had several incidents with him biting. After repeatedly scolding, redirecting, and time-out-ing him, he finally said to me, pointing at his tooth, "Mommy, my tooth is broken. My tooth is broken." His tooth looked fine. But I knew that something was wrong. We went to the dentist confident that the doctor would uncover the problem. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Konami interpreted the strange surroundings (and my anxiety) as a threat. He had a severe meltdown. He hit me, kicked me, bit me, and head-butted me.

The doctor was not able to fully examine Konami's teeth. I left the office feeling battered and beleaguered. But the moment we stepped into the cool spring air, Konami looked at me, faced flushed, nose running, eyes full of tears, voice hoarse from screaming and said, "Sorry mommy." I knew he meant it. I knew he really meant it. I gave his hand a little squeeze. "I know, sweetheart. I know." I was not angry with him - even at the height of his tirade. A mother's love does not bruise easily (my shins, on the other hand...). I only wanted what was best for him. After all, I knew he was frightened, confused, and in pain. I understood that he did not understand.

It dawned on me. We wrestle with God in much the same manner - kicking and screaming when we find ourselves in unfamiliar places, scary places, or in pain. When God redirects us for our own good, we respond to God's mothering love with tantrums. We cry out, bite, hit, and kick. But our mothering God is unflinchingly, unconditionally devoted to us.

*Pastor Angela Khabeb*



Perhaps the majority of us are most comfortable and most familiar with God as our Father which art in heaven... But throughout sacred scripture, God is also described as distinctively feminine.\* This rich and amazing imagery reminds us that the God we serve is far beyond our human understanding. Consequently, it is impossible for any single image to encapsulate all of who God is.

Whether we imagine God as Heavenly Father, Loving Mother, or Divine Parent, our words fall short. The moment we lift up any metaphor, we begin to recognize its limitations. Our God is beyond male, beyond female. That is why our finite language is severely inadequate when describing our indescribable, infinite God. Unfortunately, words are not our only limitation. Words are linked to our lived experience. When we hear words like *mother* or *father*, our minds naturally go to our own stories. Sadly, too many of us know mothers who are far from the loving mother archetype. Even our God, through the prophet Isaiah, recognizes this painful reality: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for her womb? Even if these may forget, yet I will not forget you." ~ *Isaiah 49:15*

Our God, our holy, mysterious, and merciful God is near to us. God is the perfection of the images we use to illustrate God's relationship with humanity. Regardless of our family situations, our earthly parents are human and are subject to the human condition of imperfection. But we serve a God that promises to care for us beyond the limitations of our human-ness. The psalmist declares, "If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." ~ *Psalms 27:10* God as mother offers another facet of God's love for humanity. As Mother's Day approaches, I invite you to dwell in that richness.

\* Deuteronomy 32:11-12, Isaiah 46:1-4, Hosea 13:8, Matthew 23:37.



## THE HOVERING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Pastor Chris Marien*

How does one begin to say goodbye? Just a few weeks after Easter and already we are prepare to say goodbye to our Savior as Jesus ascends into Heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father. We feel like we hardly have enough time with Jesus. Even though we have the Word to keep us in tune with the teachings of Jesus and the will of God, it never seems fair at the end of the day that God did not allow for a little more time with God's people while residing in human flesh. The day of Ascension flies by on May 14 this year. We lose Jesus on the cross after some major ministry and teaching, only to be reunited with him at the empty tomb. And in our great joy, realizing that our Savior has now risen from the dead, we get 50 more days of appearances before he ascends into his Father's heavenly kingdom.

It just doesn't seem like enough. I want so much more. I want the time to spend talking with Jesus after he has been to the other side. What is death like? How did it feel to push aside the stone? What was it like to laugh in the face of death as you pulled the grave clothes from your restored body? So many questions we never get to ask. And then, before we know it, the day of Ascension is here and our Savior ascends into heaven and we are left with...what? Is there anything better than Jesus? Why not stay on earth and coordinate a new way of life - a little beginner's course on living a new life in the afterglow of the resurrection?

However, Jesus clearly tells us that after he ascends into heaven, we will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit:

*I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. ~ John 14:16-17*

What great promise can be heard in those words? It is as if Jesus says, "Not only have I died on the cross for your sins, but in case that wasn't enough to convince you, I will be sending someone to make the whole idea of salvation and the free gift of God's love and grace more understandable." The Holy Spirit is the person who moves in and among us, preparing us for God's will and to hear God's voice and pushing us in directions we sometimes would rather not go. This is the person that now stands as witness to God's great glory and who helps to change our minds, warm our hearts, surprise us, challenge us, and propel us into the work God calls us to do as the people of God.

If we still do not understand what the ascension of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit have in common, Jesus offers these words:

*I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ~ John 14: 25-26*

It's as if, in God's great wisdom, the saints are being equipped to do the will and work of God long before we ever heard words like empowerment, equipping, and the priesthood of all believers. So while there are still millions of *alleluias* to be shouted from rooftops as we rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus, the tears of goodbye can be set aside in order to do his work.

We are not passive observers of the ministry of Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection. We are full-fledged priests and participants in the will and the work of the One who is, who was, and who is to come. Come and be party to the great glory of God. Let your hearts fill to overflowing as your joy brings service and your service finds expression. Let that expression be to the glory of God in both the ministry of Ascension, and especially, in the life you lead each day.

With alleluias still ringing.

## PASTORAL ACTS

### Baptisms

April 5, 2015 Owen Hamm

### Funerals

April 8, 2015 Dorothy Hogge

*Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.*

### First Communion

Miranda Anderson  
Tyler Castona  
Sophia Durfee  
Kylie Eckmann  
Samantha Friedrichsohn  
Megan Good  
Alexis Hernandez  
Amalie Kurth  
Alainnah Mell  
Kyle Noe  
Carmella Nowak  
Nick Nowak  
Parker Peterson  
Olivia Smith  
Emma Stoiber



## YOUR COUNCIL AT WORK

*Nada Draeger, Council President*

I have so much exciting news to report! The enthusiasm and anticipation generated in our April council meeting for the upcoming Arise 2025 retreat scheduled for May 1-2 was nearly palpable. Craig Greenwood again joined us to present the groundwork for going forward. He will be contacting each of the Wing Leaders in the coming days to prepare them for this retreat. Each of the wings will be assigned two or three council members to work and brainstorm with during the Saturday workshop. We are all excited to be part of the groundwork!

Also, very much tying in with Arise 2025 was a presentation by a few members of the Children's Ministry steering committee. They have spent an incredible amount of time collecting data from the congregation, church leaders, and site visits to come up with a fresh, contemporary approach for developing a new Children's Ministry program based on family involvement, service, and connection to our ministries here at Ascension and in the community. There will be much more updating on all of this as it evolves. Lots of beautiful, fresh ideas coming in the days ahead. I am looking forward to this journey with all of you!

Dave Hammer also presented the updated resolution concerning the many Mission Outreach ministries that Ascension participates in and supports. All of this in addition to our standard monthly agenda! Your council's collective heads are spinning!

*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





## FINANCIAL REPORT

Meg Douglas, Treasurer

March 31, 2015 Year to Date

General Fund Activity					
	2015	2015	Variance	2014	Variance
Item	Actual	Plan	to 2015 Plan	Actual	to 2014 Actual
<b>Income</b>					
Contributions	\$169,552	\$186,000	\$(16,448)	\$170,894	\$(1,342)
Rent, Interest, & Other Income	\$17,127	\$16,275	\$852	\$16,060	\$1,067
From Restricted Funds	\$18,295	\$17,357	\$938	\$994	\$17,301
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>\$204,974</u>	<u>\$219,632</u>	<u>\$(14,658)</u>	<u>\$187,948</u>	<u>\$17,026</u>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Communications	\$6,339	\$6,025	\$(314)	\$6,491	\$152
Facilities	\$59,085	\$63,439	\$4,354	\$71,200	\$12,115
Financial Development	\$24,402	\$24,411	\$9	\$24,397	\$(5)
Leadership Development	\$76	\$100	\$24	\$243	\$167
Administration	\$65,400	\$65,159	\$(241)	\$48,999	\$(16,401)
Caring Relationships	\$7,636	\$6,524	\$(1,112)	\$5,454	\$(2,182)
Joyful Worship	\$26,814	\$24,247	\$(2,567)	\$15,515	\$(11,299)
Mission Outreach	\$9,599	\$10,280	\$681	\$14,798	\$5,199
Spiritual Growth	\$19,483	\$24,521	\$5,038	\$17,016	\$(2,467)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>\$218,834</u>	<u>\$224,706</u>	<u>\$5,872</u>	<u>\$204,113</u>	<u>\$(14,721)</u>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<u>\$ (13,860)</u>	<u>\$ (5,074)</u>	<u>\$ (8,786)</u>	<u>\$ (16,165)</u>	<u>\$2,305</u>
<b>Mortgage Balance</b>	<u>\$865,620</u>				
<b>Restricted Funds Balance</b>	<u>\$174,508</u>				
<b>General Fund Balance</b>	<u>\$ (6,229)</u>				
<b>Ascension Arise Contributions</b>	<u>\$31,730</u>				
<b>Restricted Contributions</b>	<u>\$20,368</u>				

### What the numbers mean:

- Our general contributions are 8.8% behind plan for 2015, and they are 0.8% behind 2014 actual.
- Our bottom line is \$8,786 behind plan.
- Our general fund balance is currently at a loss.

If you have questions or comments on the financials or would like more details, please email me at [mdouglas1021@gmail.com](mailto:mdouglas1021@gmail.com).

## COLORS OF THE CHURCH

Joan Birner, Altar Guild

Jesus Christ is central to our worship. Therefore, the items and symbols used throughout our worship space are significant in so far as they point us to the Gospel of the living Christ, our awesome God. With this in mind, let us consider the church year and the liturgical colors.

The Church year begins in late November with the season of Advent and ends the following November with Christ the King Sunday. Broadly speaking, the church year can be classified into six seasons: Advent, Christmas, Time after Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Time after Pentecost.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provides a system of colors for use by its congregations. They are:

- **BLUE** symbolizes hope. It is the liturgical color for Advent when we celebrate the hope of our coming King.
- **GREEN** symbolizes growth in faith and growth in Christ. According to ELCA worship resources, green can be thought of as a *neutral color* in a sense. Green is used in the church year during non-festival seasons, for example Time after Epiphany and Time after Pentecost. These non-festival seasons are also known as Ordinary Time. *Ordinary* in this sense means ordinal or numbered.
- **GOLD** is only used for Easter Day. It indicates that this day is the *queen of feasts* the most important festival of the year.
- **PURPLE** is the primary color for Lent and the alternate color for Advent. Purple has two very distinct meanings during each season. During Lent, purple symbolizes penitence, repentance, and solemnity. During Advent, purple symbolizes the royalty and majesty of the coming King.
- **RED** (should be distinguished from the deeper red of scarlet) symbolizes the fire of the Holy Spirit, as in Acts 2:1-13. Bright red is used for the Day of Pentecost, Reformation Day, martyrs' days, ordinations, and certain church celebrations.
- **SCARLET** (should be distinguished from bright red) symbolizes the blood of the passion of Christ. Scarlet is used from Passion/Palm Sunday through Maundy Thursday of Holy Week.
- **WHITE** symbolizes joy, gladness, and the light of Christ. White is used during the Sundays of Christmas and Easter. It is also used on Holy Trinity and Christ the King Sundays. White is also an alternate color for Easter Day.

Our paraments are more than just church decorations. They carry meaning and inspiration. Let us experience the changes in our worship surroundings with fresh eyes. With our many and varied church traditions, we are afforded a rich tapestry of treasured symbolism that draws us closer to the eternal God revealed to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.



## LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC PROGRAM

Vicki Taylor, Director of Music Ministries

Each summer, talented young people from across the United States come together to be part of Lutheran Summer Music (LSM). LSM is a residential training and performance program that brings together 150+ band, orchestra, choir, and keyboard students from the U.S. and abroad. During the four-week program, musical excellence is achieved, lifelong friendships are born, faith is deepened, and the spark to serve is ignited. LSM will take place on the beautiful campus of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa from June 21-July 19. Scholarships are available. To learn more about LSM, please visit <https://lutheranmusicprogram.org>.





## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

*Pastor Chris Marien*

We are in the home stretch of our Children's Ministry Programming for the 2014-2015 school year. We gather for regular Children's Ministries programming on Sunday, May 3, and Sunday, May 10.

On Sunday, May 17, we will have end of the year activities including a bounce house, cookie decorating, and other surprises. Please plan to join us!

Ascension is grateful for the ministry of our Children's Ministry volunteers. Please thank them for their dedication to the children of Ascension.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for July 27-31! This summer Ascension will be offering Vacation Bible School, an exciting opportunity to learn, play, create, and grow!

Early in the year, we offered an online poll to find out if we should offer our VBS from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. or from 5:30-8:30 p.m., including dinner. Surprise! Surprise! The responses came back almost 50/50 for each time. After conversation with staff, Ascension is offering both times contingent on student and volunteer participation.

In order for each or both times to work, we will need 24 students and 10 volunteers for each time. We will be creating online registrations for both families and volunteers. The cost will be \$25/student or \$40/family. Scholarships are always available.

Look for more information in the June newsletter and in the Sunday bulletin. We are so excited to welcome VBS back into Ascension's ministry programming. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Chris, Tony Acompanado, or Vicki Taylor.



## CONFIRMATION SUNDAY, MAY 17

We gather in worship and celebration on May 17 to the glory of God around the blessing of our JOLT (Journey Of a LifeTime) confirmation students completing their Confirmation Stepping Stone.

We will celebrate the Service of Confirmation at both 9 and 10:45 a.m. on the 17th with a reception in-between services. You are invited to join us in the celebration.

Your prayers are invited for the confirmands and their families as they look to the completion of the confirmation journey:

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| • Amy Birner          | • Jacob Hausen  |
| • Jordan Christnovich | • Ryan Pichler  |
| • Mariah Fuller       | • Brady Walczak |
| • Jonah Greenwood     |                 |

*For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith.  
It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift,  
so that no one can boast about it. ~ Ephesians 2: 8*

## CRASH YOUTH AUCTION FUNDRAISER

*Tony Acompanado, Director of Youth Ministries*

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

Your participation is welcome in several ways. First, mark the auction date on your calendar and plan to attend, peruse through all the exciting auction items, and then consider bidding.

Second, our students are busy collecting donations from friends, family, and organizations, but we are also asking individuals and ministry teams within Ascension to consider donating items for auction.

Auction donation items can be any of the following:

- Services: childcare, car repair, landscaping, painting, house cleaning, tree cutting, etc.
- Vacations/Getaways: Do you have a spare week at a timeshare? How about a lake-side 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!

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

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 online form: <http://tinyurl.com/crashauction2015>.

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

## TOWELING & SENDING

Graduating seniors, along with family and friends, are invited to join us in worship on Sunday June 7, at 10:45 a.m., so we may celebrate this amazing milestone and offer a special blessing as you prepare for the next step in your journey.

In addition, please take a moment to share your post high school plans, so we may share with the rest of your church family. Please RSVP (include a picture of yourself) with the following information: the name of the high school you're graduating from and the college you will be attending, or your post-graduate plans if you're not attending college. Send information and picture to Director of Youth Ministries, Tony Acompanado, [tony@ascensionelca.org](mailto:tony@ascensionelca.org), by noon on Monday, June 1, 2015.

## MIME

Thank you to all of Ascension's high school students who participated in Mime this year! Your hard work and dedication to this ministry of Ascension is appreciated, and we rejoice at your commitment to growing in your relationship with Jesus and sharing the Good News of God's redeeming love for the whole world.

Don't forget our end of season celebration on Saturday May 9!

## MAY CRASH SCHEDULE

**May 3, 12:30-4:30 p.m.:** 9th Grade Event

**May 3, 6-8 p.m.:** CRASH

**May 9:** Mime Celebration

**May 17, 6-8 p.m.:** CRASH

**May 31, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.:** Youth Silent Auction







## CARE MINISTRIES

### GRIEFSHARE BRINGS HEALING INTO BROKEN LIVES

Ascension does a good job caring for grieving people in our congregation in the immediate days surrounding a death and funeral. Meals are provided, a service is conducted, and cards and bereavement materials are sent. But the griever needs more. A few days after the funeral, most of the people surrounding the griever return to their daily routines not realizing the deep, prolonged impact caused by the death of the spouse, child, family member, or close friend. The griever needs ongoing support and encouragement for months or sometimes years.

Care Ministries recognized this need and implemented programming this past fall and winter called GriefShare, a grief recovery support group. GriefShare is a faith-based DVD series that stresses the importance of a relationship with God as the foundation for healing. The program is 13 weeks and presents materials in a sensitive but clear manner. Kathy Kuhn, who has extensive experience working with grief, was hired to run the sessions. The program was promoted through Ascension, area funeral home directors, the GriefShare website, and a campus ministry network at Carroll University. These outlets brought many people from our community to Ascension. We have even had people begin the group at the twelfth week of the program!

Pastor Chris and Pastor Angela have been involved and were able to contribute spiritual comfort. Pastor Angela conducted the *Longest Night* service at Christmastime to assist people suffering with grief during the holiday season.

Our first group, last fall, consisted of 8-10 people from Ascension and our community. Ages ranged from young to old with a large diversity of grief. The group bonded with each other, and we were able to see how people, who in the early weeks of our program were in the deepest depths of grief, were able to heal and want to move forward in their lives. Five of them have become members of Ascension, and some became involved in Ascension activities such as Knitwits, yoga,

*Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries*

CRASH, Mime Ministry, and the El Salvador Mission Trip. God is working with these people and now they are able to rise above their grief and make a difference to others.

In January, we started another GriefShare term. Some people from our first group came back and new people joined. The new group grew to 15 people. The group had heavy matters to unpack and process including: suicide, PTSD, chronic illness, and sudden death. Each of the participants viewed a video series, participated in small group discussions, and used workbooks and Scripture.

I have reached out to other ministries within Care Ministries to connect with this group. Crosses for Christ made each participant a cross keepsake. Living Letters sent each participant a card to let them know that Ascension is praying for and supporting them. Ascension's Prayer Shawl Ministry made 15 prayer shawls; each stitched with prayers of comfort and peace. The GriefShare group is immensely grateful for Ascension's outreach.

At the end of the winter GriefShare term, a participant asked for information so that they would be able to facilitate a ministry like this in their home church. Other participants have asked about becoming members of Ascension. Donations have been made to the program, and someone has helped fund an El Salvador Mission Trip delegate. What amazing things our God has done with this group and ministry!

Pastor Angela and I are extending the Ascension GriefShare support group to the last Tuesday of each month beginning on Tuesday, April 28, from 6-7p.m., in Room 106. It will reconnect GriefShare friends and welcome new participants. The group will be called HOPE – Healing Our Pain...Eventually. The group will include a study of the book of Psalms (based on the highs and lows in life), and social activities will also be planned. Please feel welcome to join this group.

## ASCENSION BLOOD DRIVE

*Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries*

On Saturday, May 30 you can help perform dramatic rescues from the comfort of a chair. Please participate in Ascension's Blood Drive, from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Six-year-old Finn Olson, an Ascension member, relies on blood donors like you. Finn's parents learned about his *broken heart* before he was born. They tried to remain strong as Finn endured multiple heart surgeries for which he received numerous units of blood. His mom Heather says, "God bless these people who probably didn't realize they were saving a child's life. They didn't ask; they just gave." Today, Finn is still in treatment but thriving – and inspiring friends and family with his fighting spirit. You can save the day too; sign up at [www.bcw.edu/Ascension](http://www.bcw.edu/Ascension) or contact Brenda Lytle, Director of Care Ministries, [Brenda@ascensionelca.org](mailto:Brenda@ascensionelca.org), 262-547-8518. Appointments are encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome. Please bring a photo ID with your birthdate.



## MILITARY MINISTRY

*Sheri Greger, Ministry Leader*

As the daughter, daughter-in-law, granddaughter, great granddaughter, niece, cousin, sister, and aunt of military men and women, I have a passion to honor and remember our veterans and current serving military men and women. I am the new leader of the Military Ministry at Ascension, and I look forward to growing this ministry. We have small group that has started meeting and developing the mission for our ministry. Our mission statement is "Ascension Lutheran Church's Military Ministry supports military families connected to our church and provides outreach to service men and women in our community." This ministry is always looking for new people to join in and work together to fulfill our mission statement.

Are you or a member of your family in the military? We would love to gather information so we can pray and support you and your loved one. Stop by and see us on Sunday, May 3, to learn more about our ministry, in the narthex, between services. If you have updated information for family members currently serving, please bring that along so we can add that information to our mailing list. If you have further questions or would like more information, contact Sheri Greger at [sheri\\_frogs@yahoo.com](mailto:sheri_frogs@yahoo.com) or 262-424-6219.



## KNIT WITS

*Maddie Goetter, Ministry Leader*

In the last 12 months, the Knit Wits have made 2,157 hats, plus mittens and scarves, for Waukesha area charities. Thanks to everyone for your support!

Upcoming activities include:

- Monday, May 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Meeting at Ascension
- Monday, May 11, 12:30-3:30 p.m. - Lunch & Knit
- Friday–Sunday, May 15-17 - GetAway/Retreat, Port Washington, contact Celeste Gantert, 262-574-1778. (*Note: there is no Knit Fest in May*).
- Wednesday, May 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Meeting at Ascension
- Monday, June 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Meeting at Ascension

Think of the Knit Wits if you are having a rummage sale this year or cleaning out anyone's yarn stash. Donations of clean, unused yarns are always welcome (even leftover portions of skeins). For more info, contact Maddie Goetter, at 262-527-4013.





## AMEN PRISON MINISTRY

AMEN Ministries has been participating in Prison Ministry for a number of years, working with and through an Ascension member who is an inmate at Racine Correctional Institution. AMEN has provided thousands of cards for distribution at no charge to the inmates at Racine through the Prison Chapel. Without these cards from AMEN, the inmates must purchase cards at inflated prices. AMEN has also collected hundreds of Bibles, devotionals,

*Dear AMEN Prison Ministry,*

*I just want to write to you and express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for providing me with the release clothes you dropped off for me on Friday. You and your ministry demonstrate agape love in action! We obviously don't know each other and besides being brothers in Christ, the only commonality we share is our knowing (Ascension member). He's been a good friend and neighbor for nearly three years now.*

*It's been frustrating during my time in, I've stayed in constant contact with (people from my home area). I've received plenty of spiritual and personal encouragement, but I'm amazed that no one has offered any type of support or help upon my release, as you graciously have. Which is why I was surprised when (Ascension member) told me about you. Why would complete strangers do for me what those who have known me for years would not?*

*Thank you seems so little for what you've done for me. I truly am very grateful and appreciative of your kindness. Your kindness and generosity will always be remembered! May God richly bless you and your ministry in your works. I will pray for you and keep you in my heart and mind as I make a new beginning, with Christ at the helm of my life. Thank you very much again!!*

*In His name,  
(Name withheld for privacy)*

Sometimes we do ministry and wonder if we are making any difference. Sometimes, as we struggle with our sufferings (like the Ascension member in prison), we wonder where God is. Then we read a letter like this and we see

books and magazines to the Racine Prison Chapel and the Waukesha County Jail. A few times, AMEN has sent clothing to inmates about to be released. Unless *civilian* clothing is provided, the inmates can't be released. Clothing was recently provided to an inmate released on April 14. This inmate sent a *Thank You* to AMEN for their gift. That message is shared below.

*Dave Hammer, AMEN Member*



## AMEN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

AMEN Ministries has a few volunteer opportunities occurring in May...

1. AMEN needs volunteers to assist with serving supper at Hope Center on Friday, May 8. If you have questions or want to volunteer, contact Mark Otto, [markjotto44@yahoo.com](mailto:markjotto44@yahoo.com).
2. Interfaith Senior Programs of Waukesha County has dozens of requests for outdoor clean-up from seniors and adults with disabilities. This is an excellent opportunity for families, youth, and individuals. Select a time and location that fits your schedule. AMEN is organizing volunteers. If you're interested in volunteering, contact Kurt Burie, [kburie3@gmail.com](mailto:kburie3@gmail.com).
3. The Monday night AMEN bible study is serving a meal at Siena house in Waukesha the second Wednesday of every month (May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, and September 9). If you want to help serve and/or make a meal, please contact Steve Boyer, [sboyer@healthmarkets.com](mailto:sboyer@healthmarkets.com).

## A TASTE OF THE DANIEL PLAN

*Steve and Carol Spieker*



Several years ago, at a health seminar, we learned that research suggests everyone has cancer. Needless to say, we were taken aback. In a recent article by Dr. Michael Williams of Northwestern University Medical School, he states, "At any given time, everyone has up to 10,000 cancer cells in their system. Under normal conditions, when the immune system is strong, these cells are destroyed." When cancer invades someone's system to the point of symptoms and an official diagnosis is given, the patient has most likely experienced an accident, prolonged period of stress, or some other incident that has weakened the immune system.

Many people don't realize the quality of their diet can have a taxing effect on their immune system. When people fill their bodies with processed and sugar laden foods, your immune system attacks the sugar rather than the cancer cells. Sugar is being found to be food for the cancer, aiding its growth. A favorite of our health experts, Dr. Ben Lerner, shared some facts in a recent article about sugar. Many of us have known someone fighting cancer. A normal course of action to determine the cancer's degree is to have a PET scan. Dr. Lerner explains, "Shortly before a PET scan is performed, the patient is injected with sugar containing a radioactive dye. The cancer cells eat the sugar and the dye lights up like a Christmas tree when scanned. That lets the doctors verify whether the cancer has spread. Cancer cells, which grow quickly, are more likely than normal cells to take up larger amounts of the sugar." Dr. Williams concurs by stating, "Thus, it is critical the immune system be maintained in top condition. If the immune system weakens too much, that's when cancer can establish itself."

Would you like to put your cancer cells on a starvation diet? The Daniel Plan is a good start. The Daniel Plan explains how sugar negatively impacts our bodies and then offers some alternatives to keep sweetness in your life.

We purchased a new stand mixer that included a recipe book. As we perused the book, we were reminded how indiscriminately most Americans use sugar. Many recipes called for as much as four cups of sugar! Combine that with all the added sugars in beverages, cereals, snacks, and many processed foods consumed daily and you can just imagine the toll that is having on our bodies! We have not had any traditional sugars in our home for over four years. Life does go on...and you should know, there are always cookies or other sweets for us to enjoy in our freezer...just without the toxic effects of traditional sugar.

This month, we share one of our favorite cookie recipes for you to try and see for yourself. While the recipe calls for coconut sugar, it should not be confused with traditional granulated or brown sugars. Coconut sugar is extracted from coconut palm trees and possesses the desirable properties found in other coconut products and is also low glycemic so it doesn't cause insulin spikes. Coconut sugar can also be substituted at a 1:1 ratio with brown sugar in any of your favorite recipes.

### ALMOND SPICE COOKIES

- 1½ c Ground Almonds (or Almond Meal)
- 1/3 c Coconut Sugar
- 1 tsp Pumpkin Pie Spice (or Cinnamon)
- 1 Egg
- Raw Sesame Seeds

In a medium bowl, combine almonds, sugar, and pumpkin pie spice. Add egg and slowly mix until dough forms. Scoop by rounded teaspoons onto parchment lined baking sheet. Press each cookie down using the bottom of a flat glass dipped in raw sesame seeds. (The thinner the cookies are pressed, the crisper they will bake.) Bake at 325 degrees for 20-24 minutes. Makes about 1 ½ dozen cookies.





## YOUNG AT HEART

### SPRING TOUR

Please join us on Thursday, June 11 as we board the bus at Ascension at 8:45 a.m. Our destinations are the **Pabst Mansion**, lunch, and the **Sprecher Brewery**. We will arrive back at church at 5 p.m. The cost is \$52/person and payment is due on Wednesday, May 20. There will be sign-ups at church on Sundays, May 3 and 10. Questions, call Celeste Defenbaugh, at 262-370-4522.

*Celeste Defenbaugh, Minisry Leader*

### GUEST SPEAKER

Please join us on Wednesday, May 20 as we hear about the military life (1914-1918) of Leonhardt Rempe, a WWI German Cavalry Officer and a pilot who knew the Red Baron. His son, Paul, will share pictures and his father's memoirs. Paul was a professor at Carroll University. We will start as usual with a potluck luncheon at noon. Our guest speaker will start the presentation at 12:45 p.m. Everyone is welcome to this great presentation!



## PRAYER GROUP

*Bonnie Thiesenbusen, Ministry Leader*

You are invited to join Ascension's Prayer Group the first and third Mondays of the month, at 6 p.m. (please note the change of meeting time) for a special hour of praise and the raising of concerns for members of our congregation, community, and world.

*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. ~ Psalm 62:8*



## EL SALVADOR PARTNERSHIP

*Shirley Wehmeier, Mission Outreach Wing Leader*

The 26 delegates to El Salvador have returned full of hope, energy, and excitement for the partnership with San Jorge and joy at the new relationships that were formed. People have asked, "What did you do on the mission trip?" The answer is "We grew relationships." There were so many heartfelt moments spent learning about our partners and growing in faith together. We sang together, worshiped together, cried together at the memorials, cooked and ate together, played together, and even did the *chicken dance* together. What fun! What love! What joy! We realized that language does not have to be a barrier to Christian love. We share the same God and the same saving faith in Jesus regardless of where we live, the color of our skin, or the language we speak. We are all part of God's family and now we will build on the relationships that began while we were there.

We will be hosting an event on May 20, at 6 p.m. to share our photos and stories.

This trip could not have been as successful without the support of many people who donated money to assist the delegates and to assure that our partners could participate in the activities. Special thanks to the following for their generous donations:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| • Sharon Coralline          | • Betterae Riekkoff                       |
| • Terry and Juliann Griffie | • Sandy Sadowski                          |
| • Daniel and Janice Halcsik | • Todd and Marge Schroeder                |
| • Dave and Barb Hammer      | • Bonnie Siegel                           |
| • Janet Niebrugge           | • Ev and Kay Stone                        |
| • Lee and Donna Passolt     | • Paul and Shirley Wehmeier               |
| • Marie Renn                | • Cash donations for virtual mission trip |



*The Agroferreteria Team*



*Friends were made*

## LETTER FROM SAN JORGE

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Ascension Lutheran Church,

May God bless each of you and your families. We wish you blessings in your daily lives.

Through this letter, Pastor Blanca Lidia Chavez de Gonzales and the pastoral committee, together with all of our congregation, are very happy and grateful for your church delegation visit.

We are grateful to God and to you for this sister parish relationship between you and our church. We hope you were pleased with the visit. We hope the stay of our brothers and sisters was a good opportunity for you to know more about the way we live out our faith and daily lives. We will fulfill the sister parish covenant that we signed with God's help.

We are very grateful to God and you. We are always waiting for you with open arms and to celebrate our sister parish relationship.

Signed,

*Blanca Lidia Chavez, Maria Raquel Chavez, Mirna de Jesus Aguilar, Yesenia Esmeralda Rivas, Claudia Maria Flores, Pedro Antonio Villatoro, José Omar Quintanilla, José Luis Saravia, Misael Campos, Pedro Antonio Rivas, David Granados, Iglesia Luterana de San Jorge*



## OUTREACH FOR HOPE BIKE RIDE

### PEDAL TO PUSH DOWN POVERTY: SEPTEMBER 12, 2015

There is something for everyone at the family bike ride supporting the churches of the Greater Milwaukee Synod doing ministry in low income communities.

- **Casual Rider:** includes families and children, a ride on the paved Glacial Drumlin Trail, 14 miles or less if you prefer
- **Avid Bicyclist:** either a 20, 30, or 50 mile mapped, cued, and supported ride on country roads around Dousman
- **Everyone:** catered picnic lunch
- **Volunteers:** over 100 positions available
- **Non-biker:** You don't have to ride to impact lives, simply donate. The results are amazing!

Please consider joining forces with hundreds of other bikers riding with a purpose. Visit the website for updates and registration information: <http://outreachforhope.org>



## IN GRATITUDE

**THANK YOU TO THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY:** Your thoughtfulness is appreciated! This thank you note is sent with deep appreciation for the lovely prayer shawl and letter of prayer you gave me! May God continue to bless your good work. ~ *Carol Ziarniak*

**THANK YOU FROM CROSS:** It is always a true pleasure sharing the work we do at Cross in the Bread of Healing Empowerment Ministry, which brings joy, hope, and comfort to so many. We want to specifically thank you for the gift of 600 cans of soup. We are extremely thankful for this generous donation for the Food Pantry at Cross Church. We could not do what we do without the love, prayers, and support of our partners. Our partnership with you is truly a blessing.

**THANK YOU TO PASTORAL ASSISTANTS:** To all a Happy Easter! I wish to thank all the volunteers who come to see me and give me communion and pray with me. I enjoy all of our visits. ~ *Elmer Sedivy*



*Prayer Shawl Gift Bags*



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<b>Room Key</b> EH = East Hall HR = Hearth Room K = Kitchen N = Narthex PL = Parking Lot PR = Prayer Room S = Sanctuary WH = West Hall YR = Youth Room					<b>1</b> 8am Youth Gathering Prep EH 5pm Wedding Rehearsal S 6:30pm Vision Retreat, Off-site	<b>2</b> 8:30am Vision Retreat, Off-site 9am Jubilate S 10am Riverwalk, Frame Park 1pm Wedding Prep 106, 107 3pm Wedding S
<b>3</b> 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Children's Church EH 9am Puppets, Home Visits 10am BP Screening HR 10:45am Worship 10:45am Sunday School 12:30am 9th Grade Event S EH 6pm CRASH YR, EH, S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	<b>4</b> 9:45am Al Anon WH 6pm Prayer Group PR 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107 6:30pm Knit Wits WH	<b>5</b> 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6:30pm Mission Outreach 107 7pm Mutual Ministry PR	<b>6</b> 9am Young at Heart, Denny's 9:30am Cross Meal 9:30am Staff Mtg. 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 7:30pm Choir S	<b>7</b> 10am Al Anon WH 4pm Wedding Rehearsal S 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Wedding Rehearsal S	<b>8</b> 2pm Wedding Prep 106, 107 4pm Wedding S	<b>9</b> 12pm Mime Celebration WH
<b>10 MOTHERS DAY</b> 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Children's Church 9am Spanish Worship PR 10:45am Worship 10:45am Sunday School 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	<b>11</b> 9:45am Al Anon WH 12:30pm Knit Wits, Off-site 1pm Living Letters 106 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107 6:30pm Jubilate S	<b>12</b> 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 7pm Holloway Group 107	<b>13</b> 11:45am Men's Nurture Grp 106 6pm Handbells S 6:30pm AMEN Leadership Mtg. 107 6:30pm SOPHIA EH 7pm Wisdom Grp WH HR 7:30pm Choir S	<b>14</b> 10am Al Anon 10am TGBG PR 5pm Care Ministries Event EH, WH, K 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 9am Flower Sale Pick-up PL 10:30am Folk Choir S
<b>17</b> 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Children's Church EH 10:30am Puppets EH 10am Confirmation Recp. N 10:45am Worship 10:45am Sunday School 3pm Jubilate S, EH 6pm CRASH EH, YR 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	<b>18</b> 9:45am Al Anon WH 6pm Prayer Group PR 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	<b>19</b> 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 1pm Pastoral Assistants Mtg. 7pm Church Council 107	<b>20</b> 12pm Young at Heart EH, K 6pm Handbells S 6pm El Salvador Event 6:30pm Knit Wits EH 7pm Wisdom Grp WH HR	<b>21</b> 10am Al Anon WH 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 10:45am Worship 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	<b>25 MEMORIAL DAY</b> Church Office Closed 9:45am Al Anon WH 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	<b>26</b> 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm HOPE 106 7pm Holloway 107	<b>27</b> 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom Grp WH, HR	<b>28</b> 10am Al Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 8am Blood Drive WH 5pm Auction Set-up EH
<b>31</b> 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Puppets Home Visits 10am Youth Auction 10:45am Worship 12pm Celebration Band S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH						

Knit Wits Retreat

Synod Assembly